

*Approved Meeting Minutes
South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Working Group
Delray Beach, FL
January 9, 2003*

Welcome and Introductions

COL May called the meeting to order at 10:05 AM. He recognized Peggy Kiser and Mike Grunwald and Debra Brosnan who were in attendance. He noted the Executive Director's report has been moved up on the agenda (Encl. 1). November meeting minutes (Encl. 2) were introduced and approved. COL May reminded everyone that this meeting was being broadcast over the web. COL May said that it was his hope that outstanding issues related to the Modified Water Deliveries project would be resolved by this year. He proposed the Working Group create an Issue Team to address the various perspectives and as well as address the issues. He said he believed there was a lot of misinformation and this would help ensure that there was a common understanding among the parties. He asked for those individuals that were interested in participating to contact him. He would also bring a draft team charter to the next meeting. COL May also announced the Corps of Engineers' headquarters has moved to a new location in Jacksonville, 701 San Marco Boulevard.

Working Group Members	Jan. 9	Alternates
Ernie Barnett – FL Dept of Environmental Protection	-	
G. Ronnie Best – U.S.G.S.	√	
Brad Brown – NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Service	√	
Billy Causey – NOAA, FL Keys Nat'l Marine Sanctuary	√	
Kathy Copeland – South Florida Water Management District	-	Joni Burda
Wayne Daltry - Southwest FL Regional Planning Council	√	
Gene Duncan – Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of FL	√	
Maureen Finnerty – National Park Service	√	
Roman Gastesi, Jr. – Miami Dade County	√	
George Hadley – U.S. Dept of Transportation	-	
Thaddeus Hamilton - U.S. Department of Agriculture	-	
Richard Harvey – Environmental Protection Agency	√	
Ronald Jones – Southeast Environmental Research Center	-	
Barbara Junge – U.S. Attorney's Office	√	
Chris Katzenmiller – Bureau of Indian Affairs	√	
COL Greg May - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	√	
Peter B. Ortnier – NOAA	√	
Donna Pope - FL Dept. of Transportation	-	Marjorie Bixby
Fred Rapach – Palm Beach County Water Utilities Dept	√	
Terry Rice – Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida	√	
Mark Robson - Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission	√	
W. Ray Scott - FL Dept of Agriculture and Consumer Services	√	
Jay Slack – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	√	
Rick Smith - Office of the Governor of Florida	√	
Ron Smola – U.S. Department of Agriculture	√	
Steve Somerville - Broward County Department of Natural Resource Protection	-	
Craig Tepper - Seminole Tribe of Florida	√	
Henry E. "Sonny" Timmerman - Department of Community Affairs	-	
Kenneth S. Todd – Palm Beach County Water Resources Manager	√	
Julio Fanjul, Special Advisor	√	
Rock Salt, Special Advisor	√	

Whiparound

Fred Rapach said he was looking forward to a good year. He encouraged the Working Group to be more involved. The utilities are very concerned with the Pre CERP baseline issue and how it will be used and the utilities will be watching this issue closely.

Ron Smola said Thaddeus Hamilton was out sick and sent his regrets. The Agro-Ecology Workshop has now been scheduled for the last week in August and additional information would be provided later.

Billy Causey said he was very pleased with the Corps' crew along with folks from DCA that came down to the Keys to report on the Carrying Capacity analysis. There was much paranoia and misinformation surrounding this project and it helpful to have these folks come down and openly discuss the gaps in the analysis particularly in the marine module. He recognized Bill Kruczinski and Jodie Thompson for their work. They will continue to move forward with the analysis and assessment as well as encourage its use among the local planners. COL May said the Corps realized it was the right thing to do and appreciated Billy's comments. There is the ability to continue the work and build on this through the feasibility study.

Brad Brown announced his retirement this upcoming spring after 41 years of government service. Essie Duffie would continue to represent the agency.

Roman Gastesi announced there is a new Commission structure in Miami Dade that will better address policy issues. Commissioner Diaz will serve as the co-chair of the Environmental and Governmental Committee. He also solicited the group's help for agenda items for the next year. He assured the group that he along with Bill Dobson would bring more vigor on those water management issues. He asked for clarification on the modified water deliveries issue. COL May noted there was a lot of expertise around the table and he wanted to ensure there was a clear understanding of the issues. Roman also said south Miami Dade County is "the last frontier" and what will happen is still unknown. They are embarking on a watershed plan study and invited everyone to become engaged. Rock Salt noted the Biscayne Bay RCT has developed an Action Plan and this is connected to one of their priorities.

Rick Smith said he was amazed by all the efforts that are underway for the Everglades as well as other restoration issues. He said he supported COL May's suggestion noting that for successful implementation of CERP, modified water deliveries needs to be resolved. He said Ernie Barnett was unable to attend and sent his regrets. He also announced that the Governor would release his recommended budget on January 16.

Jay Slack said he was also looking forward to this year, an important one. He commended the WMD and Corps on the Interagency Modeling Center. FWS has been working closely with DEP and looking into protections for the Miami Blue Butterfly species. He offered a briefing if folks were interested.

Richard Harvey thanked Billy for his comments. He reported meeting with Ileana Ros Lehtinen and Representative Sorensen regarding wastewater funding in the Keys. They discussed looking at alternative ways to get the money to EPA without jeopardizing the current authorization. COL May said they are also working through the issue of Congressional intent. Richard announced Tom Gibson is now the Chief of Staff and will no longer participate on the Task Force. Tracy Mehan from the Office of Water may serve as the new representative.

Marjorie Bixby said she was looking forward to participating in the Modified Waters Task Team.

Chris Katzenmiller introduced himself as the new representative for the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Ray Scott said water reservations would be the subject of legislation. He said he was unclear with federal law regarding reservations. Rock Salt clarified that when the President and the Governor signed the agreement, the Governor agreed the state would reserve the water as identified in the PIRs. It was a way to balance sovereign issues and state water rights. It was a key priority to state and Seminole Tribe. It would be a major deal if renegotiations were to begin. Craig Tepper said the water rights compact is an agreement between the state and the Seminole Tribe but its foundation is federal. Ray said he observed that WRDA

reflects less than a complete understanding of how reservations are done. Fred Rapach agreed this was important and asked for it to be a future agenda. **Follow-up: COL May agreed time would be scheduled at a future meeting to discuss the water reservations issue.**

Gene Duncan said focus need to be on maintaining existing levels of flood protection. Tribe is anxiously awaiting the programmatic regulations. He said that land acquisition and sovereignty would become very important over the next year. He noted that once land is paid for and becomes Indian land, they would not turn it loose and this is "coming to a head" in the Bird Drive Basin area. He noted the Tribe has no intent to sell the land and seizing Indian lands would set a bad precedent. Rick Smith said that if Gene was referring to the letter from DEP, it is a routine letter offering to buy the land. Gene said the letter did state that if they chose not to sell they would initiate "condemnation" and the very next month, the Governing Board voted to condemn the land. He vowed it would not happen. Gene asked that water quantity and completion of modified waters is important and hoped to see a concerted effort. Water Quality is also an issue particularly with all the STAs due to be completed and the loading to the WCAs worsening. There will be a greater volume of water dumped and the pollution problem worsening due to management decisions. **Follow-up: Gene Duncan requested the Working Group focus on the issues of existing levels of flood protection, land acquisition, water quality and water quantity, and completing modified water deliveries.**

Executive Director's Report

Rock Salt presented the draft 2003 Working Group Workplan (Encl. 3a) and asked the members to review and provide comments. It will be presented for approval at the next meeting. He noted that the statute creating the Task Force requires the development of a Coordinated Budget document. The Cross Cut Budget is a report of the budget decisions and is not a Task Force recommendation. In the past, the Working Group has provided the Task Force with their key budget priorities. The intent is to present a draft at the March meeting for discussion and then to present the document to the Task Force at their April meeting. Kevin Burger noted that programs are also being considered for inclusion per Maureen Finnerty's comments. Rock said the danger is that it will be a laundry list but it is an opportunity to highlight key issues. Action/Issues Tracking Chart (3b) presented and noted that those three items labeled red from the Lessons Learned Workshop could be resolved by having a discussion a joint discussion between the Task Force and Working Group to discuss the working relationship, roles and expectations. COL May suggested a smaller body develop a framework with options. Fred supported this idea since it is vitally important. **Rock would work with COL May, Rick and those that are interested on the outline or topics structure for a joint meeting.** Those three items would be disposed of since they relate to the mission and roles. Issue Team Tracking Chart (3c) presented and he noted there has been much progress made by some of the teams.

Richard Harvey noted the group discussed reconstituting the Lake Okeechobee Team, which was deferred. He suggested a briefing on everything that is going on with Lake Okeechobee and TMDLs would be helpful. Rock noted the Working Group's Power Point presentation (Encl. 3d) is being revised and updated. Previous comments included that it was "too CERP" and not broad enough. It was provided to the members for recommendations on how to build and update this presentation. Comments should be provided to Linda Friar. Revised draft will be provided at the next meeting. Gene Duncan said he has given this presentation several times and it has been well received. Rock said his office is linking meetings to its central meeting calendar and invited members to provide his office with meetings for inclusion. Next Task Force meeting scheduled for February 2003. Richard Harvey said an in-depth ASR Briefing would be provided after the District's responses have been formally submitted. The ASR Issue Team will assess how the Corps and WMD have addressed the CROGEE comments. He noted there were a lot of comments from both the CROGEE and stakeholders. A status update will be provided to the Task Force at their next meeting. Rock Salt noted the Army would draft a concept paper on the Independent Science Review responsibility that is in the WRDA 2000. The National Academy of Science has been identified as the entity that the contract will be with. It would be set up in a way that would provide an opportunity for other groups based on the need.

Updates on Water Projects and Initiatives

Dennis Duke provided an update (Encl. 4) on ongoing projects:

- Kissimmee Basin – Kissimmee River Restoration contracts underway with five new awards this year. Lake Toho Regulation Schedule draw down underway.
- Lake Okeechobee- watershed PIR is proceeding. Critical Project award scheduled for the summer.
- Aquifer Storage and Recovery – final PMP for regional study is being prepared based on review and comments received.
- Everglades Agricultural Area, work continuing.
- Upper East Coast – Indian River Lagoon feasibility report being processed in Washington. Chief's report will be out at the end of this month for transmittal. Ten Mile Creek proceeding with contract to be awarded this summer.
- Northern Palm Beach County – Reconnaissance Report for additional 245k, draft report due out at the end of February for 30-day review.
- Water Preserve Areas –PMPs are being prepared for all components within the WPAs, Strazzulla PMP initiated.
- Miami-Dade County – Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands PMP approved and PIR underway. Flow to northwest and central WCA 3A PMP underway. C-4 General Re-evaluation Report, the authorized plan is analyzed to determine whether changes or even project is still needed. He noted the canal work was never done.
- Florida Bay/Florida Keys – final review of the Florida Keys Carrying Capacity Study is complete.
- Lower West Coast – Lakes Park design agreement signed by Lee City. Draft PIR being prepared for the Southern Golden Gates Estates. Possible WRDA 2003 consideration. COL May noted comment period would happen at a faster than normal pace. He encouraged folks to keep up via the web and through the public meetings.
- Initial CERP Update has been delayed 5 – 6 months due to data problems. Five years worth of data is being incorporated on the 2x2 model. Interagency Modeling Center is being staffed up and agencies have been invited to participate. The initial focus is on the hydrologic modeling with ecologic modeling for later on. COL May said it is hoped that with the staff at the center, try to incorporate lessons learned from past efforts. This would also help in possibly eliminating some of the disagreements that have occurred in the past. Ronnie Best, USGS working to figure out how to ensure the ecological piece is incorporated.

Terry Rice asked whether land could be condemned now if the footprint shows that it would be needed. He noted the group could not let this issue “go by” and that it would be contentious. Rick Smith explained that in the State's process everyone maintains his or her right to not sell. COL May said there are two issues, a project level issue on the Bird Drive Basin and a programmatic issue with the 25 – 30 year outlook. He said he was not sure that on the programmatic aspect, everyone has worked through all the issues. On the project issue, talking to the lawyers from the WMD would be the best way to go about dealing with this. Rick Smith said he was sure that the Bird Drive Basin, a Save Our Rivers project, had been “on the books” and approved by the Governing Board for quite some time. He noted he did not want to go on record as the spokesman for the District. However, if a project comes along and the District cannot acquire the land through willing sellers and there is substantial scientific information showing the project is needed and it is demonstrated along with a record of action by the agency to acquire the land then you would go to court. Everyone retains a right to not sell unless the Legislature or the Governor and Cabinet have granted eminent domain authority - usually on a project-by-project basis. Wayne Daltry said the Florida Legislature upon request could grant eminent domain, if it were proven that the willing seller process has been used. **Follow-up: Terry Rice requested someone be brought in to brief the group on the land acquisition process.**

Craig Tepper said this a very technical issue that possibly needed to be explained by the lawyers. He asked when a project is determined. The Seminole Tribe could not figure out more than a general outline from the maps provided along with the Land Strategy and would be unable to support the Land Strategy. Gene Duncan said he heard a difference of opinion regarding the Bird Drive Basin although not approved by Congress it is approved by the Florida Legislature. He said that State action could take sovereign land without Congressional approval and what the state thinks it can get away with. Barbara Junge made a

general comment regarding the discussion. It is a highlight of one of the difficulties the Working Group faces, whenever parties are engaged in litigation those who are employed by the government are limited to what they can say. She said it was unfair and unproductive to carry on those are discussions. She suggested Rock's office or neutral party provide regular litigation updates. Terry Rice noted it was his intent to try to prevent litigation and sort these things out.

Programmatic Regulations

Stu Appelbaum reported the regulations have been delayed and it is warranted since it was better to get the rule right. They continue to work through the issues and work with the stakeholders. Final rule has not been submitted to OMB and he did not expect that to happen before early February. OMB will then be allowed by Executive Order up to 90 days to complete their work. Once that process is completed the concurrence process will begin. It could be possibly April or May for the rule to be promulgated. Stu agreed it would be helpful to have a discussion on water reservations, pre CERP baseline at a future meeting in light of the confusion. Fred Rapach asked about the stakeholder process. Stu explained stakeholders requested, through the White House, a meeting held by either OMB or CEQ. Rock Salt added that the Administrative Procedures Act prohibits negotiations after the public comment period without re initiating public comment. There is an executive policy at OMB that as they consider various proposals, that they will consider listening to input from those people who request it. OMB is considering that possibility.

RECOVER

John Ogden provided a Power Point presentation (Encl. 5a) on four RECOVER activities. The draft Interim Goals Report (Encl. 5b) has been prepared showing the criteria that will be used and applied and comments can be submitted through January 17. Interim goals will be used to determine whether CERP is on track to meet its objectives. He reviewed the criteria for selecting indicators for interim goals. He explained that the word "target" is a general term and did not specify talking about goals for the human system, while the word "benchmark" in the legal world may imply standards. The report does present the list of 23 indicators as well as a goal statement. It does not propose the actual interim goals or target and does not describe how they will be determined or what method will be used to make the calculations. Of the 23 indicators, 8 are hydrological, 11 are ecological and 4 are related to water quality. The Corps and WMD have until December 2003 to establish targets for other water related needs. The Secretary of Interior, Army and the Governor shall execute an Interim Goals Agreement. Fred Rapach said the objective of the plan is to achieve certain goals. He asked about the difference between targets and goals and asked how easy it would be to prioritize. Goals are mentioned in the regulations and in the Legislation but the word benchmark is not used. He said that one could have more priority than the other. John said it would be the same team who would be developing. Gene Duncan added that indicators, many time are ecologically driven. It is possible to get the water right and have negative impacts on the existing biology. John explained that responses could take as long as 10 – 15 years on certain indicators. Performance Measures Documentation Report has been developed and it is these measures that will drive the evaluations. Currently developing a document with all the current, accepted performance measures that will be used. The report will describe the 105 performance measures that will be used to measure system responses. MAP is going to the technical editors, with the formal 60-day review to start in February. RECOVER Mission Statement is being looked at. Team is rethinking organization and agency participation. To maximize the team's effectiveness, substantial participation will be needed from more than the Corps and WMD. Other agencies will be needed in the decision making process. There will be a new mission statement and guiding principles to ensure all those participating have a fair part in the decision-making process. This will be going before the leadership group for review followed by individual meetings to be arranged by himself and Stu Appelbaum. Gene Duncan said that the Tribe believes RECOVER should make recommendations to the Working Group and get covered under the FACA exemption.

Public Comment

Madeleine Fortin (8.5 square mile area resident) commented on the WMD's purchase of lands not yet authorized, it was her opinion that the WMD has no problem to surplus land that it does not use. They purchase the land cheaply and then sell it for a profit a few years later. She noted there has been a lot of controversy over the amount of people who would be affected by alternative 6d. She provided a handout

(Encl. 6) she prepared from information gathered from the Dade County tax rolls. She noted there are 1,526 properties in the 8.5 square mile area. Of these properties, 1027 are left unprotected by 6d and of these 138 properties have homes on them. The assessed tax value of the 1027 properties is \$40 million. Forty-eight properties have been acquired by the Corps to date. She said that the Corps is not providing accurate information to Congress and this information was readily available.

Rick Smith said it was a requirement in the Florida Forever Act to surplus those lands if it was determined that they were no longer needed. Barbara Junge said many folks who want to sell are unable to comply because of title problems. Property owners need to check their title insurance to ensure there are no judgments. She said that just because the Corps or other government agency did not close on a property in no means evidence that they are willing sellers. Madeleine Fortin said the land has an emotional value to many people and her community has been under siege by its own government. COL May said that condemnation is not an issue and the issue has been with Congressional intent.

Dave Friedrichs (Dade County Farm Bureau) said he represents over 800 working farms. Dade County agriculture fully supports the immediate construction of the Modified Water Deliveries project and disapproves of implementation of alternative 6d. Public outreach has been the greatest failure and he added that he is delighted to see that the dialogue between the Farm Bureau, WMD and the Corps is improving. They are aware that the Corps has administered the IOP in a manner that has been helpful to Dade County; however, he said he believed that Dade County Agriculture is alive and healthy because there has not been a storm event like the ones in 1999 and 2000. If they were to experience another similar storm event, he said their industry would be over since their trees would not be able to withstand such an event.

Patrick Hayes (Martin County Soil and Water) said Loxahatchee River never seems to get mentioned in interim goals, for example. Modeling is still an issue, and he expressed concerns that in order to get the water right, the watershed needs to be right. Need to make sure the water gets set aside for a thriving environment and it needs to “come off the top”.

John Marshall (Arthur R. Marshall Foundation) commented on the proposed indicators for interim goals. The term “target” has been defined in the Coordinating Success document after much engagement. The use of the term “benchmarks” in place of “targets” is causing more confusion. He said the term “benchmark” is used in government and industry to validate various processes. The word “target” is a respected word and he said that part of the problem is the lack of focus on the original CERP goals and objectives. He said harmonization is needed to get the terms right.

Stormwater Treatment Area (STA) Optimization Briefing

Gary Goforth provided a presentation (Encl.7) on the operation and performance on the STAs, large constructed wetlands built to reduce phosphorus levels in the Everglades. This is intended to be an interim program in the water quality solution. Performance to date has been excellent in relation to the target of 50 ppb. Six STAs are four are fully operational, totaling over 41,000 acres. Two STAs, STA 1 east and STA ¾ are under construction and are due to be completed by later this year. Approximately 670,000 acre-feet of water treated in 2002. The average output concentration was almost 40 ppb removing over 84 tons of phosphorous in one year. Other technology is also being looked at and this is intended to be an interim tool.

Land Acquisition Strategy

Rick Smith said the final draft (Encl. 8) has been revised and the data updated to reflect the numbers as of September 30, 2002. Some of the WRAC recommendations were deferred until the next update. Wayne Daltrey made a motion to endorse and Maureen Finnerty seconded. Gene Duncan said he was unable to support the strategy knowing that tribal land is included for acquisition. He said that he goes to the WMD’s Governing Board meetings and just about every month a developer comes in asking for permits to develop land, land which could also be used, in his opinion, for the Bird Drive recharge area just as well as theirs. He said there is room for flexibility and that every permit that comes in does not have to be approved. He said he could not approve this knowing there were tribal lands in sight for acquisition. Craig Tepper said he had similar concerns and could not support this document at this point although he does support Everglades restoration. Fred Rapach asked about the inclusion of local land acquisition other than

what is on page 11. Rick Smith explained they have committed to work on this over the next year for inclusion in the next iteration. Craig Tepper said he was unable to identify those lands that are part of the Seminole Tribe's assets and was unable to commit. He added that he has not been provided with sufficient detailed information to determine which lands are for habitat and hydrology issues, for example. He noted the Seminole Tribe is very committed to Everglades restoration and wouldn't be building critical projects at the current pace if they weren't. **Action: Working Group endorsed the transmittal of the final draft to the Task Force. Gene Duncan, Terry Rice and Craig Tepper were opposed.**

Science Coordination Team (SCT) Update

Ron Smola said the Agricultural Workshop is now scheduled for August and further information will be provided at a later date. Ronnie Best reminded everyone that the Florida Bay/GEER Science Conference will be held on April 14 – 18 and he hoped folks would bring their major questions to the plenary session scheduled for that Wednesday. He noted the registration fee covers the cost of the conference and encouraged participation particularly from managers and decision-makers. The SCT will have a final discussion on the flows white paper at its next meeting and on the science plan. He noted the SCT is in need of an administrative support person in order to operate and requested the assistance from an agency represented at the table.

Noxious Exotic Weed Task Team (NEWTT) Update

Bob Doren provided an update (Encl. 9) on the Team's activities to date. The Invasive Exotic Plant Detection Workshop and Conference, sponsored by the Working Group, is scheduled for February 12 – 14, 2003. It will be the first workshop of its kind and will set some standards for spatial information for use with all invasive species. The Corps has received \$5.5 million for invasive species work and the team is working with Dennis Duke and his staff. \$200,000 of that money will be used to develop a federal goal for invasive species and develop that into an implementation plan. He announced that *arundo donax*, an invasive wetland plant that reproduces from 2 inches, currently exists in Florida in small isolated populations along the St. Johns River. An organization is planning to plant 8,000 acres of this plant, exact location unknown. This company specializes in producing biological fuels, grass is burned for electricity. He said he believed the Working Group could make a difference and asked them to take this issue up. Fred asked what the group could do. Bob explained said that DEP is aware of it and has the ability to stop this entire project. COL May said it would be helpful to know DEP's position. Ron Smola also questioned whether Jacksonville Electric has been contacted. Craig Tepper also asked what, if anything, it displaces. **Follow-up: Working Group asked for the *arundo donax* issue to be on the next agenda.**

Avian Ecology Workshop

Jay Slack provided an update (Encl. 10) on the three-day workshop scheduled for March 2003 in Key Largo. He is working with Rock Salt in trying to develop a process to allow everyone to get the information in from the policy, scientific and affected parties. Dr. Debra Brosnan, from the Sustainable Ecosystems Institute, will develop the format and serve as the facilitator.

CERP Outreach Update

Nanciann Regalado provided an update (Encl. 11) on the community level activities that have been undertaken. She reviewed the products that have been developed in response to what has been heard from the various communities. The website has been reorganized making it easier to navigate through it. The CERP Report, a monthly electronic newsletter, is being used in response to folks asking for updates. Environmental education resources are being developed in partnership with the school board and ENP. A lesson plan has been developed and goes out through the newspapers. Community newspapers (African American and Hispanic) are also being used to inform and engage minorities. Some information is also being provided through faith-based organizations (i.e., hand held fans). Community dialogue, encourage community leaders to go out and hold small, informal meetings on what the Everglades are and what restoration means. Logo has been developed to identify CERP activities. These are all products developed under the umbrella of the Program Management Plan for Outreach in response to what the community has said are the most effective ways to engage them. She extended an invitation to everyone to join in developing future products.

Water Resources Advisory Commission (WRAC) Update

Julio Fanjul reported the Governing Board unanimously approved the Adaptive Protocols for Lake Okeechobee in December. WRAC is working on the B List rules and is near completion. Pre CERP baseline issues are also being worked on as well as the definition of existing legal sources. Governing Board approved the WRAC serving as the advisory group overseeing the updates for the Water Supply Plans.

Biscayne Bay RRCT

Humberto Alonso provided the prioritized list of projects (Encl. 12) for Biscayne Bay. Team sought guidance from the Florida Bay and adjacent Program Management Committees. In prior years, the WMD has successfully taken the prioritized list and made them as part of the request to the Legislature for funding for Biscayne Bay. Hoping to be just as successful this year, although they are facing serious challenges due to the budget situation. Team plans to provide its Annual Report at the next meeting.

SW Florida Update

Wayne Daltry reported the Issue Team has two working sub committees (Charlotte Harbor/Caloosahatchee River and Big Cypress/Estero Bay). Their first annual meeting is scheduled for February 14th to determine which projects, from a very extensive list, is in the most demand for funding. Committee will work to ensure all Working Group member agencies have a representative on the team.

Passing of the Gavel and Vice Chair Nominations

COL May said it was a privilege getting to know everyone, many on a more personal level. He added that serving as Chair allowed him to gain insight on many of the complex issues. He said he hoped this would continue to serve as a forum where issues could be discussed. He presented Rick Smith, the incoming chair with a personalized gavel. Wayne Daltry presented COL May, the outgoing chair, with a gavel as well.

Rick reiterated that implementing CERP is the most important thing that has to be done over the next few years. He said that it was his hope to streamline the agenda. He encouraged everyone to think about how the Working Group could add value and provide him with suggestions. He opened the floor for Vice Chair nominations. Barbara Junge nominated Maureen Finnerty, noting she is a veteran of this process and has a vested interest as guardian of the Everglades. COL May seconded nomination. Maureen Finnerty accepted the nomination. **Action: Working Group voted without objection for Maureen Finnerty to serve as Vice Chair for the coming year.**

Barbara Junge announced she would be leaving the Department of Justice and this would be her last meeting. She introduced Norman Hemming who will serve as the new representative from Justice. Maureen Finnerty wished her well and thanked her for all her hard work.

The following items were requested for follow-up:

1. Time would be scheduled at a future meeting to discuss the water reservations issue.
2. Gene Duncan requested the Working Group focus on the issues of existing levels of flood protection; land acquisition, water quality and water quantity, and completing modified water deliveries.
3. Rock would work with COL May, Rick and those that are interested on the outline or topics structure for a joint Task Force/Working Group meeting.
4. Terry Rice requested someone be brought in to brief the group on the land acquisition process and on what is expected from people who own the land in the CERP foot
5. Working Group asked for the *arundo donax* issue to be on the next agenda.
6. Draft Charter for the Modified Water Issue Team would be presented for discussion at the next meeting.
7. Working Group requested a discussion on water reservations and pre CERP baseline at a future meeting, in light of the confusion.
8. Draft Coordinated Budget document will be presented at the next meeting
9. Lake Okeechobee and TMDL Briefing

Meeting adjourned at 3:40 PM.

Enclosures:

1. Agenda
2. November meeting minutes
3. Executive Director's Report
 - a. Draft 2003 Working Group Workplan
 - b. Actions/Issue Tracking Chart
 - c. Issue Team Tracking Chart
4. Corps Projects Power Point presentation
5. RECOVER Update
 - a. Power Point presentation
 - b. Draft Interim Goals Report
6. Madeleine Fortin's handout
7. Stormwater Treatment Area (STA) Optimization Briefing
8. Draft Land Acquisition Strategy
9. Invasive Exotic Plant Detection Workshop and Conference flier
10. Avian Ecology Workshop
11. CERP Outreach Power Point Presentation
12. Biscayne Bay FY2004 Recommendations
13. Working Group Charter